

Brentham Society Advice Sheet:

EXTRACTOR FANS



A vent for an extractor fan needs planning application and should comply with building regulations that include a minimum distance from neighbour's windows as well as being as visually discreet as possible. If wall mounted, this will depend on how well it sits on the material and colour of the wall. The use of white plastic on brick walls is likely to be refused.

BASIC ADVICE:

The preferred design for a first-floor bathroom is the type that goes through the ceiling into the loft space to a tile vent on the roof. This should not be too close to a chimney or ridge.

If positioned on a wall it should not be close to a window.

The following advice covers the usual conservation options:

EXTRACTOR VENTING Discreet External Output Methods for conservation areas:

Plastic cowled vents or louvres will rarely be approved in a conservation area. Instead, use one of the following heritage or flush solutions:

- **Terracotta Airbrick Integration:** The most common and widely approved method is ducting the fan directly into a genuine **terracotta airbrick**. This blends seamlessly into period brickwork. You can use a standard square-to-round adapter behind the brick to attach your internal duct.
- **Flush-Fit Cast Iron Grilles:** If you have stone or darker brickwork, a flush-mounted, low-profile **cast iron or dark bronze grille** (such as the [SDS London Concealed Fix Grille](#)) matches traditional architecture much better than modern plastic. Cast iron grills can be painted white if mounted on a white rendered wall.
- **Colour-Matched Slim Grilles:** If plastic is your only option due to weight or budget, manufacturers like [Blauberg](#) offer round, low-profile fixed grilles in regional heritage colours like **Cottage Red, Anthracite, and Terracotta** to closely match the facade. This is more likely to be acceptable on a white wall.
- **Soffit or Roof Venting:** Duct the fan upwards through the ceiling and vent it through a **discreet tile vent** on the roof or a **flush grille** hidden underneath the roof soffit/fascia.

CONCLUSION:

The installation of any vent will need advice from an experienced builder or surveyor as there may be issues with the suitability of a particular position and model that should be considered before the work is started.

For further advice contact advice@brentham.com